

December 20, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We are in the final days of the Season of Advent. Our celebration of the birth of Jesus is almost upon us. We are also closer to the Second Coming of Jesus as time progresses. May all of us be ready to meet the Lord both in Holy Communion this Christmas and whenever He comes to meet us at the end of our lives by making a good confession of our sins in the Sacrament of Penance if we have not done so recently. Please remember there are multiple times available Tuesday through Christmas Eve in our collaborative. Please see the enclosed schedule for the remaining confession times as well as all Mass times during the upcoming Christmas Season. We want to thank all of our ushers and other volunteers who have been working and planning to welcome people to our Christmas Season Liturgies which begin at the end of the week. May Jesus bless this most joyous time of year with His grace, love, and peace! We all need to pull away from the confusion and darkness of the world to be with Jesus and our families during these days. May the Light of Christ which shown first at Bethlehem keep shining brightly in all of our hearts by the power of His Sanctifying Grace alive within us!

Here is a little bit of history about the celebration of Christmas as we prepare for the wonderful upcoming season:

Even though the Bible does not record a specific celebration of a feast of Christ's birth, the Infancy Narratives of Matthew and Luke form the basis of the Christmas celebration. Thus, the history of Christmas ultimately goes back to the birth of Jesus Christ around 4 BC. At least by the time of Matthew and Luke's Gospels, Christians began to reflect on the birth of Jesus Christ, and its significance. A few of the early Church Fathers speculated about the birth of Jesus, but the actual liturgical celebration of Christmas cannot be fixed with certainty before the very early 4th century. Some scholars think that the celebration of Epiphany (originating in the East), which included the nativity and modern Christmastide themes, was celebrated much earlier (possibly late 2nd century). The celebration of Christmas uniquely as the nativity of Jesus Christ, however, originated in the West, probably in North Africa. While various 3rd century Church Fathers (including St. Hippolytus of Rome and Sextus Julius Africanus) believed Jesus was born on December 25, the earliest surviving reference to December 25th as the liturgical celebration of Christmas is in the Philocalian calendar, which shows the Roman practice in AD 336.

The Apostolic Constitutions (c AD 380) mandate the celebration of Christ's birth on December 25th, and his Epiphany on January 6 (see Book V:III:XIII). The celebration of Christmas spread throughout the whole of the East and the West in the 4th century. By the 5th century, almost all of the Church was observing December 25th as the Feast of the Nativity and Epiphany on January 6th, although some Christians still kept January 6th as a holy day which included the nativity. The West was slower to embrace Epiphany, but by the 5th century Rome included it as a feast. Today, in the Western Church, the season of Christmas, called Christmastide, includes the Epiphany (the manifestation of Christ to the wise men) and the baptism of Jesus. Also, in the Catholic Church we remember and celebrate the divine Motherhood of the Blessed Virgin Mary, with the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God, which falls on January 1st.

Christmas was universally celebrated until the Reformation, but many Protestant reformers rejected Christmas. The English Puritans were particularly hostile to Christmas and went to lengths to suppress it. During the brief Calvinist reign in England, parliament forbade the celebration of Christmas, even going so far as to force shops to be open. This attitude carried over into the Americas where Christmas was outlawed or criminalized in Puritan states. For

example, in Massachusetts, until the 1830s, anyone who missed school or work on December 25th was subject to a fine. During the earliest days of the USA, with the exception of Catholics, Anglicans, and Lutherans, the religious and secular celebration of Christmas would have been quite rare. Even in the 21st century, many people, for a variety of reasons (all suspect from a Catholic viewpoint), reject the celebration of Christmas." Taken from: prayerist.com/christmas.html

These days of late Advent continue to call us on to prepare for the coming of the Kingdom of God. The private revelations become more intense as the days and weeks go by. As we know, we do not have to believe in private revelation, however, the things that continue to happen around us and throughout the world should certainly move every believer to question if the biblical prophecies of the time preceding the Second Coming of Christ is closer than we might have thought before. Here are a few more messages from heaven that continue to call us to respond with greater urgency as the days go by:

Pedro – This is the Right Time
Our Lady Queen of Peace to Pedro Regis on December 8th, 2020:

Dear children, I am the Immaculate Conception. I ask you to turn away from sin, for my Son Jesus loves you and awaits you with open arms. Do not allow the devil to deceive you. You are the Lord's and you should follow and serve Him alone. Sin leads you away from the Lord and destroys you spiritually. Repent. Seek the Mercy of My Jesus through the Sacrament of Confession. Let yourself be led by the Lord's Hands. Tell everyone that God is making haste and that this is the right time for the great return to His Grace. Do not depart from prayer. Only through the power of prayer can you walk the road to holiness, facing all obstacles. Courage. I am your Mother and I have come from Heaven to call you to conversion. Do not retreat. Take care of your spiritual life. Difficult times will come for those who love and defend the truth. Many will retreat out of fear, but those who remain faithful to the end will be proclaimed Blessed of the Father. Onward without fear. Tomorrow will be better for the righteous. This is the message that I give you today in the name of the Most Holy Trinity. Thank you for having allowed Me to gather you here once more. I bless you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen. Be at peace.

Angela – You Resemble Victims of Evil
Our Lady of Zaro to Angela on December 8th, 2020:

This evening Mother appeared all dressed in white. She was wrapped in a large blue cloak studded with glitter that also covered her head. On her head she had a crown of twelve stars. Mother had her arms open in a sign of welcome; in her right hand was a long white holy rosary as if made of light. Her feet were bare and rested on the world. On it was the serpent, which Mother was holding firmly with her right foot. The serpent was shaking its tail hard but was unable to move. Mother was sad and a tear was running down her face. May Jesus Christ be praised

Dear children, thank you that this evening, on this day so dear to me, you have again responded to this call of mine. Dear children, I urge you to follow me on the path of grace and holiness: I ask you to keep away from sin. Unfortunately, you are increasingly resembling victims of sin and evil, so much so that you no longer recognize it and even no longer approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation. My children, no sin is so great as not to be forgiven by God: the important thing is to repent.

Children, these are times of pain; I ask you not to let yourselves be caught unprepared. It is necessary for you to make frequent confessions; I want all my children to run to this source of grace which is confession and to let themselves be filled with God's love. Children, once again I invite you to multiply family prayer cenacles as a source of defense against all the evils that today threaten to destroy the family. Please perfume your homes with prayer; do not be afraid — I am with you and will make you feel my maternal presence in an extraordinary way. Let yourselves be carried in my arms like baby Jesus; I am here with open arms and await your "yes."

Then I prayed together with Mother and finally she gave her blessing:
In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Taken from: <https://www.countdowntothekingdom.com/>

Come, Lord Jesus!
In our Lord who will come in Glory,
Fr. Derda, Fr. Steve, Deacon Russ & Deacon Ed